



Apple (Botanical)

Marcia Reiss

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Apples have sustained, delighted and intoxicated people throughout history. This ubiquitous fruit has always been more than something to eat or drink; it is planted deep within the myths, religion and art of almost every culture. Icon of beauty, desire and sin, of wholesome country harvests, healthy eating and hidden poison, the apple is a symbol, recognized as readily as a brand of computers and a record label as it is on supermarket shelves.

One of the most widely distributed fruits on the planet, spread by man, beast and bug over millions of years, today's apples originated in the mountains of Central Asia and journeyed along the Silk Road to Europe and the New World. From the days of Charlemagne to Johnny Appleseed and the colonization of South Africa, settlers were required to plant apple orchards, leading to the development of new towns. The fruit figured in the politics of expansion and the displacement of Native Americans on the American frontier; once a seasonal fixture of every small farm, the apple is now a global commodity, produced, packaged and distributed as a mass-market item.

This book explores the apple's history and the latest debates about the use of agrichemicals, the rise of organic and heirloom orchards, and the hopes and fears of genetic crop modification. Beautifully illustrated with historic and contemporary images, and with a directory of popular and heirloom varieties, *Apple* is a mouth-watering exploration of this fascinating fruit.

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